



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8

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The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

Thank you for your September 13, 2018, letter to Andrew Wheeler, the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, requesting the EPA's continued collaboration with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at the Silver Bow Creek Butte/Area and Anaconda Smelter Superfund Sites. The EPA and ATSDR share your concerns and commitment to protect the health of all residents in Butte and Anaconda.

Currently, both the Butte and Anaconda EPA site teams are working with ATSDR on health and medical monitoring studies. For Butte, ATSDR worked with the EPA early in the Superfund process. In 2001 the exposure investigation by ATSDR found that all blood lead levels and urine arsenic levels were well below the levels of health concern. In 2014 the first phase in a series of public health studies looked at the effectiveness of the Residential Metals Abatement Program (RMAP) for Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit (BPSOU). This study was conducted along with an Incidence and Mortality Study conducted by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (MDPHHS). ATSDR is providing technical assistance to the EPA and participates in the working group that periodically evaluates biomonitoring approaches and data as part of the periodic public health studies.

Results of the 2014 phase one public health study indicated declining blood lead levels in Butte over four consecutive two-year periods from 2003 through 2010. Results of the MDPHHS study indicated a slightly elevated incidence of skin cancer and no other cancer outcomes were consistently elevated when compared with age-standardized rates at the State and national level. Currently, the EPA, Butte Silver Bow Health Department, the Atlantic Richfield Company, ATSDR, MDPHHS, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and other community professionals are conducting a phase two medical monitoring study.

In Anaconda, ATSDR, with support from the EPA, started an Exposure Investigation in September 2018, which provides a snapshot of current lead and arsenic exposures. The response from the community was unprecedented; 191 people participated, and over 150 were placed on a waitlist for future testing. The EPA and ATSDR are currently finalizing an interagency agreement by which the EPA will fund the CDC laboratory costs for a second round of testing. ATSDR is funding the staff and travel. Testing is tentatively planned for November of this year.

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The EPA will continue to provide the maximum public involvement that is possible in the Consent Decree negotiations at both Superfund sites to make the public aware of any new proposed actions, and to solicit public comments and feedback before any actions are put into final form in a Consent Decree.

We appreciate your inquiry. If the EPA may provide anything further, please contact me, or your staff may wish to contact Jody Ostendorf, Regional Congressional and Intergovernmental Liaison, at (303) 312-7814 or ostendorf.jody@epa.gov

Sincerely,

Douglas H. Benevento
Regional Administrator

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